

BOOK REVIEWS

Ionic Surgery in the Treatment of Cancer. By G. Betton Massey, M. D. The A. L. Chatterton Co., New York, 1910.

The treatment of malignant growths by other means than excision has received considerable attention in recent years. Caustics, the thermo-cautery, X-ray, and radium have been tried and the indications for their use have been better understood. Treatment by ionization has been less extensively studied and consequently is less known so far as its efficacy is concerned. The experience of the author with this method is therefore all the more interesting particularly in view of the claims made for it. Passing over some of the first sections of the book which deal on the nature of malignant growths, the search for the possible cancer germs, the physics of the method, and operative details of ionic applications interest is arrested by the last part of the work which contains the case-histories of individuals treated by ionization. A close study of the histories impresses one most favorably in individual instances, but nevertheless the impression remains that the method has but a very limited application like other procedures which have been more carefully investigated. We do not wish to assume an incredulous attitude regarding the subject nor do we wish to discourage further study of the ionic treatment of cancers, but from the evidence presented by Dr. Massey it is clear to us that it is not destined to outshine other better known methods.

Symptomatic and Regional Therapeutics. George Howard Hoxie, A. M., M. D. D. Appleton & Co., 1910.

In view of the large number of materia medicas and works on therapeutics adorning our library shelves, the arrival of a new work leads us to investigate the author's excuse for his addition to the array. In his preface the author tells us that his work contains: "Material collected for the course in general therapeutics recommended by the Committee on Curriculum of the American Medical Association—a recommendation adopted also by the Curriculum Committee of the Association of American Medical Colleges. Inasmuch as the course forms a transition from the laboratory to the clinic, more attention is given to the discussion of the principles underlying the various methods of treatment than to an elaboration of the relative merits of the various drugs that have been recommended during the centuries of development of the art of healing." The author has succeeded in giving a rather detailed, and consequently practical resumé of the methods of treatment in medical practice. The book can certainly be recommended to students, and likewise to practitioners looking for a simple and rational description of therapeutic methods.

R. B.

The Practical Medical Series, Vol. 3. The Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat. Edited by Casey A. Wood, C. M., M. D., D. C. L., Albert H. Andrews, M. D., Gustavus P. Head, M. D. Series of 1910. The Year Books Publishing Co. Chicago.

This little book is one of a series of reviews and comes as the third volume. It is handily arranged and follows the same general lines as its predecessors. The field is well covered, the indices complete, both as to subjects and authors and the cuts and printing are good.

All interested in the special subjects of eye, ear, nose and throat can keep abreast of the times most readily by such a work, and I therefore heartily recommend it to the profession.

The Practical Medicine Series.—Volume V, Obstetrics. Edited by Joseph De Lee, A. M., M. D., Professor of Obstetrics, Northwestern University Medical School. The Year Book Publishers. Chicago, 1910.

This volume, which is one of the well known series, deals with the year's progress in obstetrics. The name of the editor is sufficient guarantee for the thoroughness of presentation. For those who have neither the inclination nor time to follow the literature scattered through numerous journals this book, containing as it does, a résumé of both scientific and purely practical aspects of recent advances in obstetrics, fulfills a distinct need.

In the section on the Physiology of Pregnancy we note references to some points of much interest. The question of early diagnosis of pregnancy still attracts the attention of investigators notwithstanding a clear recognition of the subjective and objective phenomena. Withal, the certain diagnosis often remains difficult and uncertain in the beginning. Naturally under these conditions obstetricians would welcome any method which would make early recognition definite. The work of Fieux and Mauriac seems to be a step in this direction. From a study of the toxic action of the villi the observers claim to have demonstrated the formation of an antibody which may be revealed by the action of the complement in the haemolytic test. The authors apply the haemolytic test with an antigen made from villous masses derived from a two months' human ovum. With this and similar antigens they tested 55 pregnant women and obtained positive results in every case of pregnancy of 2 or 3 months' duration. The findings were negative in all cases under one month and over four. The hope may here be expressed that more work will be carried out along these lines and that something of definite practical value may come from it.

We also note reference to the interesting investigations of L. Loeb on the functions of the corpus luteum in relation to decidual formation. This worker shows most conclusively that the internal secretion of the luteal body sensitizes the uterine mucosa so that normal or mechanical stimuli induce decidual formation. The bulk of experimental work having a bearing on obstetrics relates, however, to eclampsia. Since Lubarsch and Schmorl placed this condition on a clear anatomico-pathological basis there has been much speculation as to the mechanism by which the intoxication is brought about. Some believe that the primary causative factor is resident in the fetus, others in the uterus or placenta, while a few like Ewing still maintain that it is in the kidney. Fehling supported the fetal theory before the Congress at Giessen, claiming that the fetus possessed a metabolism entirely independent of the mother and formed within its tissues haemoglobin, bilirubin, gall and glycogen. A placental origin finds considerable support in the researches of Polano, Schmorl, Freund and others. It has been shown that decidual cells are present in various organs of the body in this disease; and it is believed that the presence of these cells brings about a systemic maternal reaction resulting in the formation of antibodies, called syncytiolysins. When present in excessive quantity it is assumed that the body is unable to synthesize them, a condition which leads to eclampsia. The discovery of placental ferments capable of splitting albumen, dissolving red corpuscles, and oxidizing various substances has brought the placenta in still greater prominence during the last year. The results of all this work is briefly summarized in the volume.

In the department of practical obstetrics it is evident from a glance through this little book that the center of interest lies in Caesarian section, vaginal, intra-peritoneal, and extra-peritoneal. The indications for this operation have been much extended in recent years so that it is now utilized not only